MARVEL COMICS

SPIDER-MAN

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THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

SKROCE HUNTER

'Twas a Night Before

X-MAN

WESTSIDE MEDICAL CENTER...

C'MON, DETECTIVE LEWIS!

YOU CAN'T KEEP THIS GUY ON ICE FOREVER.

WANNA BET, URICH?

ANY TRUTH TO THE RUMOR HE'S LINKED TO THE *BLACK TARANTULA?*

WHERE'D YOU HEAR THAT? WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE FRACAS ON THE DOCKS THE OTHER NIGHT?

HE'S A FOREIGN NATIONAL WHO ILLEGALLY ENTERED THIS COUNTRY FOR CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE.

I'M ALREADY SQUABBLING WITH THE *FEDS* OVER HIM.

SEE LAST ISSUE -- Ralf.

SORRY... I HAVE TO PROTECT MY SOURCES!

AND I HAVE TO PROTECT MY ALLEGED PERP FROM NOSY REPORTERS, AND --

KRASH

WHAT'S *THAT* --?!

ONE THING'S FOR SURE...

IT WASN'T *SANTA* SLIDING DOWN THE CHIMNEY!

YOU EVER BEEN PISTOL-WHIPPED, URICH?

TRUST ME...

... YOU WOULDN'T LIKE IT!

MERE MINUTES LATER...

WEEEEEEEEE

THOUGH THE PAIN FROM HIS RECENT INJURIES WOULD HAVE SURELY IMMOBILIZED A LESSER MAN --

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-- HE WILL NOT ALLOW HIMSELF THAT **LUXURY** UNTIL HE HAS REGAINED HIS HONOR.

HIS REAL NAME IS LONG SINCE FORGOTTEN.

HE IS KNOWN ONLY AS **EL UNO!**

THE ONE WHO IS THE FORCE AND FURY OF THE DEATHLESS MASTER!

THE ONE WHO LIVES TO SERVE THE **BLACK TARANTULA!**

A GRIM AND DESERVING **PUNISHMENT** AWAITS THOSE WHO CAUSED HIS INJURIES AND RECENT IMPRISONMENT!

DEATH SHALL COME TO THE WOMAN NAMED **DELILAH** --

-- TO THE COSTUMED FOOL CALLED **SPIDER-MAN** --

-- AND TO ALL WHO DARE HIS UNHOLY WRATH!

'Twas the Night Before Christmas...

a Holiday Tale starring the always-Amazing Spider-Man!

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CONGRATULATIONS, Mr. PARKER! YOU'VE FINALLY FOUND THE PERFECT *GIFT* FOR YOUR LOVING WIFE!

JUST IMAGINE THE PURE DELIGHT THAT'LL SHINE IN *MARY JANE'S* EYES IF SHE FINDS THEM UNDER THE TREE.

YESSIR! THOSE BOOTS ARE DEFINITELY MADE FOR WALKING.

THEY'RE ALSO WAAAY OUT OF MY PRICE RANGE!

HAWKING PIX TO THE ***DAILY BUGLE*** ON A FREELANCE BASIS IS BARELY COVERING OUR LIVING EXPENSES --

-- ESPECIALLY SINCE MJ AND I RECENTLY DECIDED TO RETURN TO ***ESU*** TO FINISH OUR EDUCATIONS!

WE JUST DON'T HAVE THE EXTRA CASH FOR ANYTHING FRIVOLOUS...

... LIKE CHRISTMAS!

IT ISN'T ***FAIR!*** WE DESERVE A LITTLE HAPPINESS AFTER THIS PAST YEAR! WE LOST SO MUCH, AND --

WILL YOU TAKE THE ***BABY,*** HON?

BE MY PLEASURE, SWEETIE!

HOW'S DADDY'S LITTLE BUNDLE OF JOY?

MJ DESERVES THOSE BOOTS.

I GOTTA FIND A WAY TO PAY FOR 'EM.

I JUST GOTTA!

BEEP BEEP

HEYYY! IT'S THE BUGLE!

MAYBE MY LUCK'S FINALLY ABOUT TO CHANGE!

I LOVE THE CITY AT THIS TIME OF YEAR.

THE BRIGHTLY COLORED DECORATIONS, THE HAPPY SOUNDS AND TASTY SMELLS.

EASY FOR YOU TO SAY, *Rose!* YOU WEREN'T *Trashed* BY THE BLACK TARANTULA'S BULLY BOY!

BE OF GOOD ***CHEER***, DELILAH.

I HAVE A ***SURPRISE*** FOR YOU.

WAK

ONE OF MY CONTACTS JUST REPORTED THAT YOUR FAVORITE MUSCLE MAN MANAGED TO ESCAPE POLICE CUSTODY.

I'M GOING TO GET ANOTHER *Shot* AT HIM?

I COULDN'T ASK FOR A BETTER *Present!*

I JUST WISH I HAD AN APPROPRIATE GIFT FOR THE ***BLACK TARANTULA*** HIMSELF...

BUT WHAT DO YOU GET FOR A MAN WHO WANTS YOU ***DEAD?!***

HAA-CHA! THE BUGLE CAME THROUGH FOR ME.

TWO ASSIGNMENTS WHICH SHOULD NET ME JUST ENOUGH TO MAKE MARY JANE A VERY HAPPY -- AND FASHIONABLE -- LADY ON CHRISTMAS MORN.

BUT I GOTTA MOVE MY TAIL IF I'M GONNA BAG BOTH SHOTS --

-- DROP OFF THE FILM --

-- AND SCORE THE BOOTS BEFORE THE STORE CLOSES!

THE FIRST GIG SHOULD BE A BREEZE!

THE SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR NEEDS A FEW SNAPS OF A STREET PROPHET --

"-- WHO'S BEEN GATHERING QUITE A FOLLOWING IN WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK!"

GO ON, MEREDITH...

SO, LIKE I WAS SAYING, I'M REALLY GONZO OVER THIS COOL GUY...

BUT HE, LIKE, STILL HAS A THING FOR HIS OLD GIRLFRIEND... EVEN THOUGH SHE'S, LIKE, WAYYY OVER HIM!

ANY CHANCE YOU COULD, LIKE, USE YOUR POWERS TO MAKE HIM...

... FORGET HER?

WHAT GOOD WILL THAT DO?

YOU'LL NEVER KNOW UNTIL YOU TRY.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I DO, MEREDITH.

MAYBE THE TWO OF YOU SHOULD JUST TALK.

I MUST BE ON A ROLL!

THAT'S GOTTA BE MY SUBJECT, AND I FOUND HIM WITHOUT ANY --

-- TROUBLE?!

THIS IS JUST ***GREAT!***

THE TEMPO OF MY SPIDER-SENSE ***INCREASES*** AS I DRAW CLOSER TO HIM!

Uh-Oh! LOOKS LIKE HE'S TAGGED ME!

GUESS I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED.

HE IS SUPPOSED TO BE A ***PSYCHIC*** --

-- AND, A PRETTY ***POWERFUL*** ONE IF I'M A JUDGE!

Oh, MAA-ANN! HE'S STARTED MOVING ON ME, AND WE'RE SURROUNDED BY CIVILIANS.

THERE'S NO WAY I CAN SUBTLY SLIP AWAY, AND DITCH MY CIVVIES.

WHO ***IS*** THIS GUY? WHAT DOES HE WANT?

AND ***WHAT*** AM I GONNA DO IF HE DECIDES TO THROW DOWN AGAINST ME?!

I KNOW IT'S PRACTICALLY A ***REQUIREMENT*** IN SITUATIONS LIKE THIS...

... BUT IS THERE ANY CHANCE WE COULD PASS ON THE GRATUITOUS FIGHT?

Uh... ***SURE***... SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.

HOW'S ABOUT WE GO FOR COFFEE, AND A TALK?

I'M UP FOR THE TALK...

... BUT I'D PREFER TEA!

AT THAT VERY MOMENT...

SOMEWHERE IN ARGENTINA...

ESTAS LOCO?!

WHAT *MADNESS* IS THIS?!

I-IT'S ONLY A SIMPLE CHRISTMAS TREE, MASTER.

IMPUDENCE DOES NOT BECOME YOU, CHESBRO.

ONLY A *CHILD* WOULD APPRECIATE THIS HOLIDAY REMINDER -- AND NO CHILD LIVES *HERE!*

TAKE IT DOWN! I HAVE NO CAUSE TO CELEBRATE THIS SEASON!

NOT ONLY HAS *EL UNO* FAILED TO GAIN ME A FOOTHOLD IN THE LUCRATIVE NEW YORK CRIME MARKET, BUT HE SEEMS TO HAVE VANISHED AS WELL!

HAVE *FAITH,* MASTER!

EL UNO HAS BEEN A LOYAL AND STEAD-FAST SERVANT OF THE *BLACK TARANTULA* FOR MANY CENTURIES!

NO MATTER WHAT CRUEL FATE HAS BEFALLEN HIM, HE WILL EVENTUALLY FIND A WAY TO REESTABLISH *CONTACT!*

I HOPE YOU SPEAK THE *TRUTH,* CHESBRO.

I SINCERELY DO.

I DOUBT WE'LL GET ANY ***PRIVACY*** WITH YOUR FAN CLUB ON YOUR TAIL.

NATE, WE NEED HELP...

ADVICE...

GUIDANCE...

THEY BOTHERING YOU?

NO PROB!

D-DID YOU JUST ***DO*** SOMETHING?

THESE PEOPLE ARE SUDDENLY ACTING LIKE WE'RE ***INVISIBLE.***

WE ***ARE...***

THEY THINK WE'RE WALKING AHEAD OF THEM --

*-- INSTEAD OF SOARING **UPWARD!***

HEYY!?

W-WHAT ***ARE*** YOU?

SOME KIND OF ***MUTANT?***

WHY SHOULD I TELL ***YOU?***

IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS YOU CAN MANIPULATE ***MATTER*** AND ***ENERGY*** --

-- AND YOU MUST ALSO BE ***TELEPATHIC*** BASED ON THE WAY YOU MESSED WITH THOSE PEOPLE!

YOU GOT A ***PROBLEM*** WITH HOW I HANDLED THEM?

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO REQUESTED PRIVACY!

YEAH, BUT I NEVER EXPECTED YOU TO ACT SO *IRRESPONSIBLY.*

DEFINE "IRRESPONSIBLY."

WHAT THAT BE, LIKE, IF I SCANNED *YOUR* MIND --

-- AND UNCOVERED YOUR *WEB* THING?

W-WHAT DO YOU *MEAN?*

WEB THING?!

I GOT NO IDEA *WHAT* YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

LIKE I'M REALLY BUYING YOUR INNOCENT ACT!

Uh... *PETER,* ISN'T IT?

HAVEN'T WE'VE ALREADY ESTABLISHED I CAN *READ* MINDS? YOU'D BE WELL ADVISED TO --

YIKES!

-- SAVE THE *COYNESS* FOR SOMEONE YOU CAN CON!

ARE YOU *CRAZY?*

WHERE DO YOU COME OFF PULLING A STUNT LIKE THAT?

WHERE'S YOUR SENSE OF *RESPONSIBILITY?*

AREN'T YOU THE GUY WHO JUST TRIED TO *LIE* TO ME?

I DON'T LIKE PEOPLE WHO KEEP *SECRETS,* Mr. PARKER.

OKAY -- *NO SECRETS!*

WE'LL GO IT YOUR WAY!

LIKE YOU REALLY HAVE A *CHOICE!*

MEANWHILE, ON THE **WESTSIDE**...

MOVE IT, PAL! WE'RE TAKING YOU TO A ***SHELTER*** FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.

YEAH! THIS AIN'T THE WEATHER FOR ***STREAKING!***

I-IT AIN'T ***FAIR!*** ME AND MY BUDDIES WERE MINDIN' OUR OWN BUSINESS WHEN THIS ***WACKO*** POPPED UP, AND DEMANDED OUR ***CLOTHES!***

YEAH! YEAH! FASHION PLATES LIKE YOU ARE ALWAYS PRIME ***TARGETS*** DURING THE HOLIDAYS.

NYPD

YOU'D BE ***SURPRISED,*** OFFICER.

IN THESE CRAZY TIMES, ALMOST ***ANYONE*** CAN BECOME --

-- A ***TARGET!***

YOU WANT THE *READER'S DIGEST* VERSION OF MY LIFE? *FINE!* I WAS BITTEN BY A *RADIOACTIVE SPIDER* WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL.

I ACQUIRED SOME PRETTY AMAZING *POWERS*, AND BECAME SO *FULL* OF MYSELF --

-- THAT I COULDN'T BE BOTHERED TO STOP A *BURGLAR* WHO WAS RACING PAST ME!

A BURGLAR WHO LATER *MURDERED* MY UNCLE!

I...

I REALLY HAD NO IDEA.

IS THERE MORE?

YEAH...

TOO MUCH TO GO INTO NOW!

THE POINT IS I LEARNED THAT WITH GREAT POWER SHOULD ALSO COME GREAT RESPONSIBILITY!

YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT *THAT* BEFORE YOU GO *TRESPASSING* IN SOMEONE'S MIND!

BEFORE YOU BARE MORE *SOULS* OR EXPOSE OTHER *SECRETS!*

BUT I SUPPOSE IT'S EASIER TO *FORCE* PEOPLE --

-- TO ACT THE WAY *YOU* WANT!

YOU THINK YOU *KNOW* ME, PARKER?

YOU *DON'T!*

WE HAVE A LOT MORE IN *COMMON* THAN YOU REALIZE --

-- AND YOU'RE GOING TO *SEE* IT ALL!

WH-WHERE ARE WE, NATE?

IN MY MIND, PETER! YOU'RE EXPERIENCING MY MOST VIVID MEMORIES OF THE WORLD I CAME FROM!

Y-YOU'RE FROM SOME KIND OF PARALLEL UNIVERSE?

I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHAT IT WOULD SEEN TO YOU. TO ME... IT WAS SIMPLY HOME!

A PLANET WHICH WAS RULED -- AND EVENTUALLY DESTROYED -- BY A TYRANT!

THESE IMAGES --! THEY SEEM SO HAUNTINGLY FAMILIAR, LIKE DISTORTED, FUN HOUSE MIRROR VERSIONS OF MY OWN NIGHTMARES!

I'D HATE TO THINK THAT SUCH AN ABERRATION COULD HAVE ACTUALLY EXISTED.

AND YET, ON SOME INSTINCTIVE LEVEL, I KNOW IT DID!

FOLLOW ME, PETER...

WHAT'S THIS?

IT'S WHERE EVERYTHING CHANGED FOR ME, AND I LEARNED MY OWN LESSON ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY!

T-THAT MAN IN YOUR ARMS --?!

HIS NAME WAS FORGE, AND FOR ALL INTENTS... HE WAS MY FATHER!

WHEN HE DIED, I IGNORED EVERYTHING HE HAD TAUGHT ME --

-- AND ALLOWED MYSELF TO BE EXPLOITED!

I LATER LEARNED THAT THE MAN WHO WAS USING ME --

-- WAS THE SAME ONE WHO HAD KILLED FORGE!

LIKE YOU, PETER, I KNOW ALL ABOUT PAIN AND GUILT --

-- AND I ALSO FAILED TO SAVE SOMEONE I LOVED!

Uh... WE GOT OFF TO A REAL BAD START, NATE.

LET'S TRY AGAIN!

I'VE GOT A FEW ERRANDS TO RUN.

CARE TO JOIN ME?

WE CAN TALK ON THE WAY!

BEST OFFER I'VE HAD ALL DAY.

THESE ***ERRANDS*** -- THEY CONNECTED WITH THOSE ***BOOTS*** WHICH KEEP FLOATING TO THE FRONT OF YOUR MIND?

STOP THAT!

I'M ***SERIOUS***, NATE. YOU ***SHOULDN'T*** EAVESDROP ON ANOTHER PERSON'S THOUGHTS.

IT'S VERY ANNOYING!

OKAY! OKAY! BUT ***MARY JANE*** SEEMS, LIKE GREAT!

SHE ***IS!***

I'M ALSO REAL SORRY TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR RECENT ***TRAGEDY.***

GOING FOR IMMEDIATE COUNSELING WAS A GOOD IDEA, BUT I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD FEEL ***GUILTY*** ABOUT --

NATE -- THIS ***ISN'T*** A SUBJECT I WANT TO DISCUSS NOW!

MEANWHILE...

WHERE ***ARE*** YOU, MY FRIEND?

YOU ROBBED THOSE TRANSIENTS WITHIN A TEN BLOCK RADIUS OF THE HOSPITAL.

ARE YOU STILL IN THIS AREA?

ARE YOU, EVEN NOW, LOOKING FOR --

-- ME?!

QUAM

THAT'S IT?

YOU CAME ALL THIS WAY TO PHOTOGRAPH A ***HOLE*** IN A BUILDING?

IT'S WHAT THE ***BUGLE*** WANTED!

NEVER EVEN TOLD ME ***WHO*** -- OR ***WHAT*** -- CAUSED IT!

NOT THAT IT MATTERS. I JUST WANT TO DROP THE FILM, AND BUY SOME BOOTS!

I'M REAL GLAD I PACKED EXTRA CIVVIES TODAY.

BE CAREFUL WITH THE CLOTHES NEXT TIME! THEY'RE NOT ***CHEAP*** ON THIS WORLD.

I'LL TRY TO REMEMBER.

TALK ABOUT ***UNEXPECTED!***

NOT ONLY DID ***J. JONAH JAMESON*** PAY ME WITHOUT A SQUAWK -- HE EVEN KICKED IN A ***HOLIDAY BONUS!***

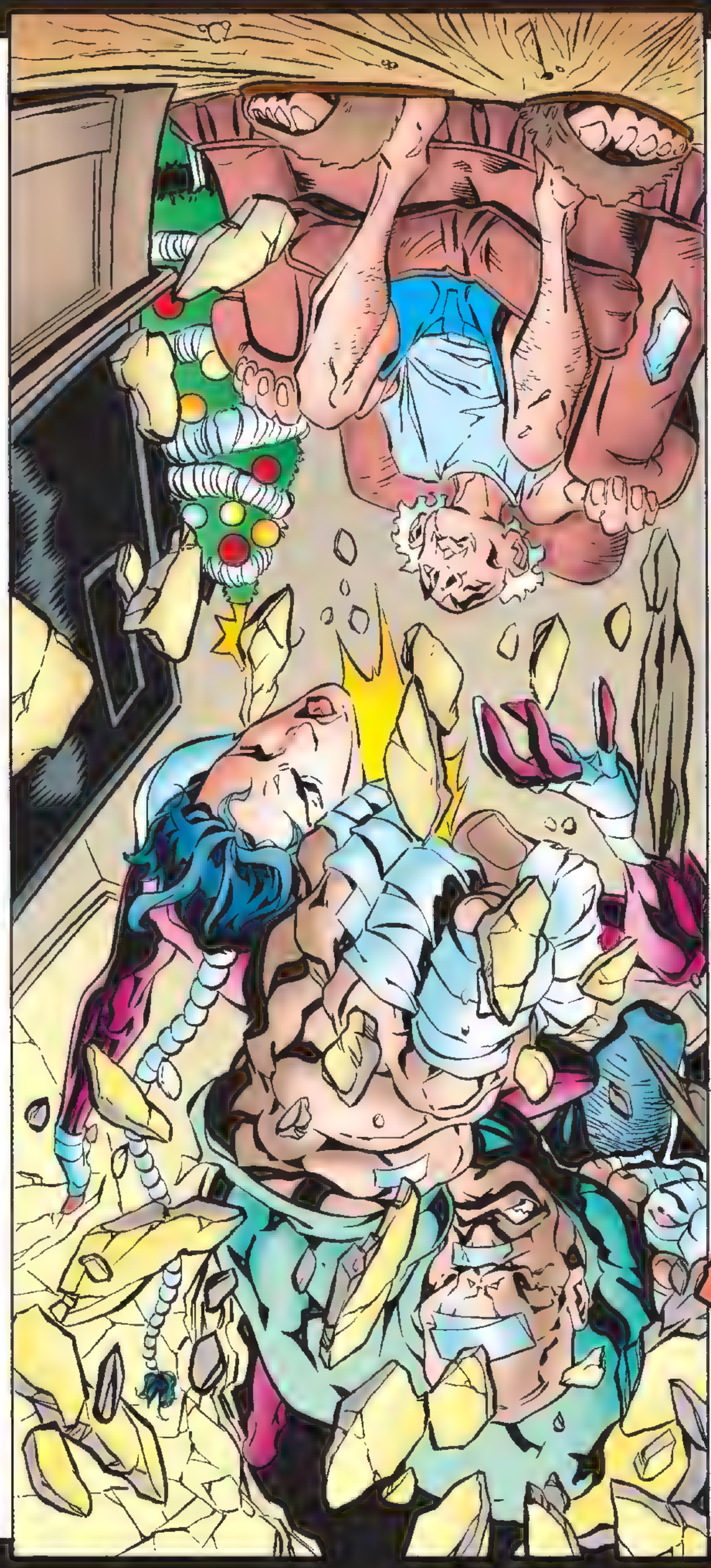
YOU... ER...***DIDN'T...?***

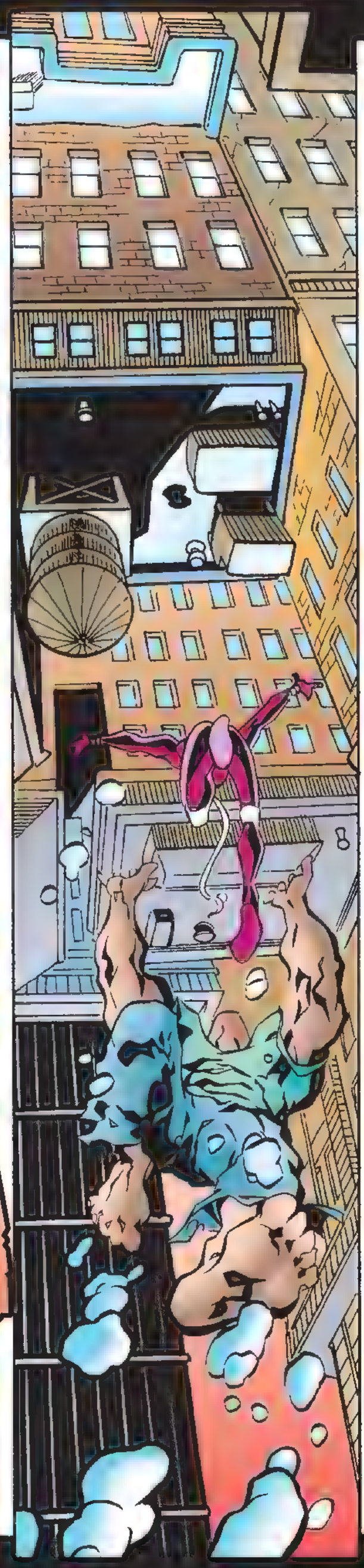
NOPE!

BY THE WAY, NATE...YOU GOT ***PLANS*** FOR TONIGHT?

WHY DO YOU ASK?

WOOF SMOOCH





KRAK

TRUST ME... EVERYTHING'S *COOL!* I CALLED *MARY JANE* AND *AUNT ANNA*...AND THEY PRACTICALLY *INSISTED* YOU COME!

INSISTED?

WELL... THEY SAID IT'D BE OKAY!

WE'RE ALWAYS HAPPY TO MEET A NEW FRIEND OF PETER.

I LIKE THE WAY THIS BOY EATS.

SOMETHING TELLS ME IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE YOUR LAST HOME COOKED MEAL NATHAN.

LONGER THAN YOU COULD GUESS MA'AM.

ARE YOU IN Pain, SWEETIE?

DON'T Worry... IT WON'T Hurt FOR LONG!

THANKS FOR ALLOWING ME TO SHARE YOUR CHRISTMAS EVE.

IT WAS OUR PLEASURE. DON'T BE A STRANGER!

YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN, Mr. PARKER.

I THINK SO.

AT TIMES LIKE THIS, I'D SAY MY LIFE IS ALMOST PERFECT.

ALMOST --?!

PETER --?

gftt

WAKE UP, PETER.

I CAME TO WISH YOU MY VERY BEST FOR THE HOLIDAYS, AND THE COMING NEW YEAR!

A-AUNT MAY --?!

IS IT REALLY YOU?!

OF COURSE **NOT**, PETER.

THIS IS ONLY A **DREAM**... BUT YOU CAN STILL TELL ME WHAT'S BEEN BOTHERING YOU!

I-IT'S ABOUT THE ***BABY***...

... I JUST CAN'T FORGIVE MYSELF FOR NOT BEING WITH MARY JANE WHEN...

WHEN...

IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT!

THERE WAS **NOTHING** YOU COULD HAVE DONE!

THAT'S WHAT OUR THERAPIST KEEPS SAYING, BUT...

LISTEN TO HER, PETER! YOU KNOW IN YOUR HEART THAT'S SHE'S TELLING YOU THE TRUTH.

AND YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT THE BABY ANYMORE.

LITTLE MAY IS **SAFE**... AND **HAPPY**.

YOU AND MARY JANE WILL BE **REUNITED** WITH HER SOMEDAY.

T-THANK YOU, AUNT MAY...

THANK YOU!

YOU'RE WELCOME, PETER.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

SOMEWHERE IN ARGENTINA...

ANY WORD FROM *EL UNO?*

NOT YET, MASTER... BUT THIS PACKAGE ARRIVED FROM THE STATES.

I TRUST IT HAS ALREADY BEEN SCANNED AND CLEARED BY OUR EXPLOSIVE EXPERTS.

OF COURSE.

SHALL I OPEN IT?

IS SOMETHING *WRONG*, CHESBRO? WHAT DOES THE PACKAGE *CONTAIN* --?!

A CHRISTMAS WREATH MADE OF ROSES, AND --

-- *Oh, GOD!* --

I-IT'S EL UNO!

H-HIS HEAD HAS BEEN RETURNED TO YOU... WITH WARMEST REGARDS FROM *THE ROSE!*

MERRY CHRIST...

SINCERELY

ROSE